



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2007

*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBUCKLE
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

CHILD SMUGGLERS SENTENCED TO PRISON

TUCSON – Leticia Adelina Ortiz, 24, of Yuma, Ariz., and Miguel Fernandez, 18, of Phoenix, were sentenced on March 20 to prison for smuggling children into the United States from Mexico. Ortiz was sentenced to 14 months incarceration by U.S. District Judge Marvin Aspen, and Fernandez was sentenced to 15 months incarceration by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata. Ortiz had pleaded guilty on December 5, 2006, to Conspiracy to Transport an Illegal Alien. Fernandez had pleaded guilty on January 9, 2007, to Conspiracy to Transport an Illegal Alien for Profit.

Ortiz, who was charged in CR 06-1810-TUC-JMR, admitted the following facts when she pleaded guilty:

On October 16, 2006, I entered the United States from Mexico at the Mariposa Port of Entry in Nogales, Arizona as the passenger in a car driven by my boyfriend. A 5-year old boy, B. F. R.-M. and I were in the backseat of the vehicle. I claimed to the inspector that the boy was my son and presented an Arizona birth certificate for the boy, that had the name and date of birth inked in by hand. After waiving my Miranda rights, I admitted that I knew the boy had no documentation to enter the United States legally, and that I was doing his mother a "favor" by attempting to cross the boy using a marked-up copy of my own son's birth certificate. I did not know the boy's true name, and only knew the woman purported to be his mother by the first name "Vanessa." B. F. R.-M. was determined to be a Mexican citizen with no authorization to be in the United States.

Fernandez, who was charged separately in CR 06-1604-TUC-FRZ, admitted the following facts when he pleaded guilty:

On August 22, 2006, I applied for admission into the United States via the pedestrian lane at the Nogales Port of Entry, in the District of Arizona. I was accompanying a 12-year old minor male, D. A. S.-F., and told the Inspector that the boy was a friend of mine, and we were going shoe shopping. The boy provided the Inspector with a birth certificate for another child and claimed he was the boy named in the certificate. The Inspector referred us to secondary inspection. After Miranda, I admitted I did not know the boy, and that I had provided him the birth certificate and told him to tell the Inspector that his name was "Javier." I admitted that I was to be paid \$300 to bring the boy into the United States and then give him to an unknown man who would transport the boy to Tucson, Arizona. I knew the boy was present in the United States illegally.

-MORE-

The investigations in these cases were conducted by United States Customs and Border Protection, Nogales, Arizona. The prosecutions were handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR 06-1810-TUC-JMR
CR 06-1604-TUC-FRZ
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-084(Ortiz Fernandez)

#